

Child Care and Early Learning e-Newsletter

May 19, 2020

Welcome to The Regional Municipality of Durham's Child Care and Early Learning updates e-newsletter. This edition is to update child care operators on health-related recommendations and information related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Closure Updates

Closure Order

Two important Provincial announcements were provided:

- The Provincial closure order has been [extended to May 29th](#).
- The Province of Ontario also provided an [update on school closures and child care](#).

Guidelines for Child Care

The Early Learning and Child care sector has not yet received official guidance from the Ministry of Health or our Medical Officer of Health related to reopening. When the closure is lifted, centres will need to have a health and safety plan in place that follows direction from the Province. The Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) has created sector-specific guidelines to help protect workers, customers and the general public from coronavirus (COVID-19) in Ontario. The PSHSA is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Labour and works with Ontario's Public and Broader Public Sector employers and workers, providing training, consulting and resources to reduce workplace risks and prevent occupational injuries and illnesses. The information available online <https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace>.

PLEASE NOTE: The PSHSA documents are an excellent resource to consider as the process of policy and procedure development related to re-opening programs begins to occur however official 'Reopening Guidelines' are still in the development phase. There will be direction from various federal, provincial and municipal offices as the process evolves. While the labour-related information in the PSHSA documents is valuable and some health directives may indeed be used as guidance for reopening in the long run, please be aware that the official directives/processes may differ.

Funding Updates

On Monday May 11th you received a memo from Shannon Fuller, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, outlining the Provincial sustainability plan for child care. Durham Region Children's Services, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for Child Care in Durham is working with the Ministry of Education to make the best plan to support you, the child care operators in Durham. While we continue to work out details with our Ministry advisors, I can provide some clarifications and decisions that will impact Durham Operators:

Sustainability Plan - General

The [Provincial sustainability plan](#) considers two types of expenditures and requires child care operators to apply to the [Federal Government's Economic Response Plan](#) for funding to cover costs related to each. All child care operators are expected to research and optimize these federal supports. To aid in your research, our team has created a web page summarizing these and other support options. Please visit the [Children's Services web site](#) for a full list of the Federal, Provincial and local support options.

1. Fixed Overhead Costs: Child care operators should work with their landlord to determine whether they will benefit from the [Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program \(OCECRA\)](#). This benefit can cover up to 75% of rent costs for eligible applicants. The remaining 25% will be included in the Provincial sustainability review. Provincial funding may also be provided through CMSM's for other eligible fixed monthly costs.
2. Salaries and Wage supports: Child care operators can apply through the [Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy \(CEWS\)](#) program. This covers 75% of staffing costs for eligible organizations. Operator are required to apply for staff costs (including head office staff) who continued to receive income during closure.

POS / Non-POS Operator Eligibility

- For operators with a Purchase of Service Agreement for Fee Subsidy with the Region of Durham, you will work with The Children's Services Division to develop a sustainability plan to support your operations during closure.
- For operators with no POS, you will be required to [apply directly](#) to the Ministry of Education.

Durham's Reconciliation Process to Support Sustainability:

The Early Learning Team will begin to review operator budgets, financial statements and data gathered from you during closure to develop an individual plan to support your organization. The sustainability review may include but is not limited to the following:

- Operator Expenditures
 - Budget and financial statement information to determine fixed costs
 - Information gathered on fees charged up to April 9th
 - Eligible staffing costs during closure
- Operator Revenues
 - GOP
 - Fee Subsidy
 - Wage Enhancement

Your Quality Assurance Advisor will reach out to you in the coming weeks to discuss.

Funding Updates

Wage Enhancement

Beginning in June, we will suspend the WE payment to all operators who are currently closed. As the Ministry memo states, all operators are required to apply for Federal Response Plan funding to support staffing costs during the closure period. Operators who have continued to pay their staff salary should apply to the CEWS – at this time it is our understanding that this process will include all payroll amounts that are included in the employee compensation including the WE paid to staff.

General Operating Program Funding

Payments will continue based on previously allocated amounts. This funding will be reconciled as required during this process. As stated, your approved fixed costs and information related to support funding received (e.g. CEWS, OCECRA) will determine the funding that your program will be eligible to access.

Fee Subsidy

The Fee Subsidy billing process was suspended for all closed sites.

To ensure cashflow remained available to sites that are closed, a monthly payment equivalent to an average of the January – March 2020 Fee Subsidy payments was made for April. May payments are still to be determined. All Fee Subsidy equivalent payments made since the closure will be included in reconciliation process.

Fee subsidy **advances** have been discontinued at this time for all sites except for Home Child Care Operators. Once centres reopen your organization can reapply to receive advance payments based on the enrollment at the time of application.

Please continue to send [Julie Gaskin](#) your questions. Due to the high volume of email, she will gather questions and provide information and clarification in the form of email updates to all operators. As we work with our Ministry of Education advisors to build the sustainability plan for Durham, Julie will continue to provide clarification and communication as quickly as possible.

Thank you all for your cooperation and commitment to maintaining early learning and child care in Durham Region.